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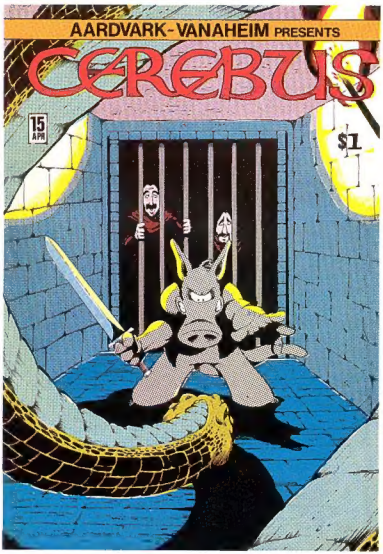
CEREBUS

bi-weekly



reprinting Cerebus number fifteen (1980) in its entirety

June 16, 1989

CEREBUS
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The inside front cover of Cerebus 1 to 70 featured a 'Note from the Publisher' written by Deni Loubert. Dave Sim and Deni Loubert were married from October 6, 1978 to August 20, 1983. Deni Loubert currently resides in Long Beach, California and is the owner and publisher of Renegade Press, 2705 East 7th St., Long Beach, CA., 90804.

CEREBUS

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

It seems that things just go so fast with this new monthly schedule.

The story this issue is, once again, great. With Cerebus being monthly, Dave has gotten quite into keeping things moving more smoothly from issue to issue. I think you will see some interesting improvements in the next five months or so.

As for myself, I have shelved my college plans temporarily and am working full-time once again at a printing company after taking a year off to work on Cerebus. I'll admit it's going to take a bit of getting used to — but it's sure never boring. Dave works hard on this book. He can put in ten hours a day and it's a seven-day-a-week job. But it's worth it if the appreciation is there in return. Putting Cerebus out on a monthly basis means there is less to report here, but more to read in the long run. I only hope there are enough Cerebus fans out there to support this crazy idea. We have heard from no-one as yet about conventions, so it appears — for now — that we will not be going to any cons this summer. If it turns out that way, Dave is considering a few projects to work on during his month off (that's when the 80 page **Swords of Cerebus** goes to press). If you know of something you'd like to see Dave try — let us know. We always like to hear what's in your heads. Meanwhile, let's get comfy and check out what insanity Cerebus has gotten himself into this month ...

Deni

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The introduction below was written for **Swords of Cerebus**, six volumes of which were published reprinting Cerebus 1 to 25. It was written in 1981.

concept near and dear to American Democratic and Republican presidents and Canadian Conservative and Liberal prime ministers). Of course the bureaucracy is in it's infant stages in Cerebus and consequently seems to solve the problem of the finite economy quite nicely, by making government it's own job-creation program. I also envisioned Palnu as a grand experiment in socialism and uniformity. Everyone would wear the same clothes, eat the same food, live in uniform dwellings and procede full speed ahead on whatever task the "Director of Trade" had set for them as a people. Basically this city was an Oligarchy gone strange. Heads of various families vied for the position of Grandlord and the most popular with his peers was the one who held the title . . . until he was no longer popular. I saw the present Director of Trade as a charismatic businessman in the midst of an old-boy aristocracy, consolidating his position with the people by capturing the lion's share of Estarcion's assets and distributing them like dividends to his citizens (I read a while ago that Alaska is doing the same thing with its windfall oil profits. No matter how bizarre I try to make the story, real life usually beats me to it). As the quintessential figure of the emerging merchant class, the Director of Trade would be concerned with running a profitable city. Palnu becomes the first import-export dominated culture to also manufacture consumer goods, mass-producing the tunics, trousers and boots everyone wears and exporting what they don't need to clothe their own people. The problem was that I kept picturing K'cor as the Grandlord. Someone big enough and strong enough to keep everyone in line and function as the absolute center of his city-state. All roads would lead to the Grandlord's office in Palnu's Trade Building.

It was not until Christmas of 1979 when Deni and I attended a ChristmasCon in Philadelphia (really) and we stayed with Howard Leroy Davis of the Delaware Valley Comics Consortium the night before that I figured it out. I had bought the latest Comic Journal at a Philadelphia comic shop that day and it contained the first major review of Cerebus by Kim (give me a "K") Thompson. You have to understand that this first review was critically important to me, because after two years, I had had almost no feedback from the major fan press, which led me to believe that either a) there was something seriously wrong with the book that led everyone but a couple of thousand loyal fans to dismiss it out of hand or b) no one really knew what to say about it besides "weird stuff".

One of the points Kim made was that (except for Red Sophia) most of the parodies I had done became, to him, solid characters in their own right - in effect, greater than the sum of their parts. This was immensely reassuring to me, since I had begun to think by the end of year two that potential reviewers were looking at the book and saying "Right. Elric, but he talks like Foghorn Leghorn. HaHaHa." I had avoided this kind of parody since introducing Elrod for fear that people would see it as an inability to concoct original material. After reading Kim's review (for the eighth time I think) I decided to see if I could apply an outside figure to the role of Grandlord and make him stick. Groucho came to mind almost immediately.

Small detour . . . . I introduced a friend of mine, Lyle Fisher, to Groucho in Grade 11. I'd rack my brain to remember Groucho lines from the Marx Brother's movies and every day, I'd nail Lyle with another one.

"We have to fight for this lady's honour, which is more than she ever did."

"Do you have milk-fed chickens? Well squeeze one and bring me a glass."

Lyle got into more trouble in Physics class

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for laughing out loud while I was (ahem) just trying to finish writing up the last experiment. Strangely enough, the only other lines that would crack Lyle up would be Foghorn Leghorn lines.

"It's a trunk son! Big suitcase, that is!"

The impact of these characters wasn't lost on me, I guess, and it is natural that they would end up in Cerebus.

The interesting thing about Groucho is that, like John Wayne, he came to *be* the person he *portrayed*. A kind of integration of character and the man took place over the years. I should think that was why he was so pleased when a Los Angeles television station started showing the old "You Bet Your Life" show and that it garnered a wide following in a short time. "You Bet Your Life" was Groucho the Natural Wit, improvising repartee with Joe and Mary Average, proving week after week that it wasn't just great writers that made the Groucho character tick. Groucho was Groucho. I doubt that many people realized before then Groucho's flair for improvising the kind of dialogue he dispensed in the Marx Brothers' movies. It was this quality of verbal manipulation and control that became the essence of Lord Julius (Julius Marx is Groucho's real name). Like Rufus T. Firefly, the head of state for Freedonia in the Marx Brothers' "Duck Soup", one senses Lord Julius stumbling from one calamity to another, his nimble wits and the lack of sense of humour on the part of his underlings, giving him the advantage in most situation. The major strength of the Groucho character is his imperturbability and his refusal to be cornered on any point of contention. "Whatever it is, I'm against it!" Firefly sings to the assembled people of Freedonia. Sung to a bureaucracy, you could keep a thousand lawyers employed full-time trying to find a way around the purity of the nonsense.

"Baskin, my boy, come in. Whatever it is, I'm against it."

"Lord Julius?"

"Unless of course, I'm for it, in which case the tie goes to the runner."

"It's the papers you asked to see on the shipment to Eshnosopur."

Lord Julius' position affords nothing but options. If he says he doesn't remember that shipment, his underlings dutifully relay that message, throwing whoever they relayed it to into confusion and near panic.

"Gak! Doesn't remember? I told you! It's a set-up! A trick!"

One pictures Groucho as welcome replacement for Ronald in the Oval Office.

"Casper, my boy, come in. I want to talk to you about Argentina."

"What about Argentina?"

"Funny. That's just what Margaret Thatcher said."

Suffice it to say that after two years of writing Lord Julius, I am continually amazed at the very basic comedic richness of the character Julius Marx developed for the world at large to enjoy. I try to remain as faithful to it as I can, and I look forward to aging him in the book as the world saw him age . . . the eternal anarchist, caustic, brilliant, insufferable, maddening, and hilarious at the same time. I think every civilization needs their Julius Marx. Palnu is just fortunate enough to have theirs running the whole show.

I remembered while reading the three Palnu issues what an immense task I had set for myself doing what was essentially a sixty-page story. At the time I tended not to see the book in terms of being one very long continuity. I was striving to hold to a reasonably fixed view of Estarcion, chafing

Concludes in two weeks.

A DAY IN THE PITS
SYNOPSIS: HAVING BROKEN UP A MEETING OF REVOLUTIONARIES (SEE LAST ISSUE) THINGS SETTLE DOWN FOR CEREBUS IN HIS ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF SECURITY FORCES IN PALNU! AFTER A TIME, HOWEVER, RENEWED EVIDENCE OF REBEL ATTACKS ON THE BUREAUCRACY INDICATE THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES ARE MORE WIDESPREAD THAN WAS ORIGINALLY THOUGHT, PROMPTING CEREBUS TO CALL ON LORD JULIUS...
IN SHORT, LORD JULIUS, THE REVOLUTIONARIES YOU HOLD IN YOUR PRISON ARE A SMALL PART OF A MUCH LARGER GROUP...
PROBABLY DIRECTED BY A LEADER WITH A GREAT...
UNHAND ME! I AM A PRIEST OF THE LIVING TARIM...!
...AND I DEMAND TO SEE LORD JULIUS!!

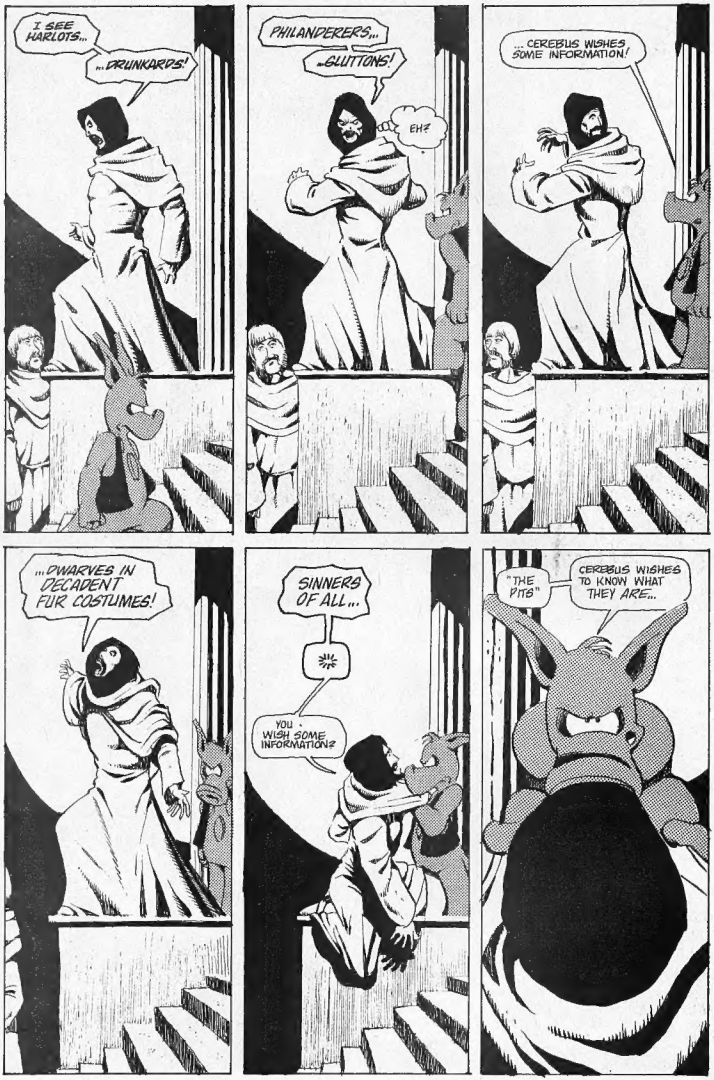
LORD JULIUS - FORGIVE THIS INTRUSION! SHALL I CALL THE...
LET HIM GO!
I'LL ADMIT IT'S NOT VERY LIKELY...
BUT HE MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SAY...
I AM HERE, LORD JULIUS BECAUSE IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT, IN A FORTNIGHT...
... YOU INTEND HAVING ANOTHER OF YOUR DRUNKEN DEBAUCHERIES!
SORRY-- THE GUEST LIST IS ALREADY SET FOR THAT DRUNKEN DEBAUCHERY!
BUT I'LL SPEAK TO MY SOCIAL SECRETARY AND WE'LL TRY TO SQUEEZE YOU IN SOMEWHERE
YOU-- YOU DARE TO JEST IN THIS MANNER WITH A PRIEST OF MY STANDING...?!
STANDING?
I'M AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
THE ONLY ROOM WE'LL HAVE IS FOR SOMEONE LYING DOWN...
GAH!
WE'LL PENCIL YOU IN FOR THREE CUSHIONS BY THE WINE VAT...
AND YOU CAN GIVE US AN ANSWER IN A DAY OR SO...
SEEMED LIKE A DECENT SORT-- WHAT DID YOU THINK?
VERY PRIESTLY. ANY CHANCE HE'LL SHOW UP AT YOUR FESTIVAL?
PROBABLY NOT-- IT'S COUPLES ONLY.
BOOK

LORD JULIUS...?
SPEAKING.
LORD JULIUS THE MINISTER FOR EXECUTIVE PLANNING REQUESTS AN AUDIENCE...
NOT A CHANCE--THE LAST TIME I GAVE HIM AN AUDIENCE, HE JUST STOOD THERE AND STUTTERED UNTIL EVERYONE WALKED OUT ON HIM...
NO, NO--HE WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU, LORD JULIUS...
WELL, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO...?
CANCEL THE AUDIENCE AND SHOW HIM IN...
MINISTER FOR EXECUTIVE PLANNING?
ONE OF MY STENOGRAPHERS.. THE CABINET TITLE IS STRICTLY HONORARY...
... IN HONOUR OF WHAT?
IN HONOUR OF HIS PAYING TWO HUNDRED PIECES A MONTH TO USE IT...
I SENT HIM TO THE TORTURE CHAMBER TO RECORD ANY INFORMATION WE CAN SQUEEZE OUT OF THOSE REBELS...
THE MINISTER FOR EXECUTIVE PLANNING, M'LORD!
BASKIN, MY BOY...
COME IN, COME IN!
READ ME WHAT YOU HAVE SO FAR...
"AAAGH"
"NO. NO. NO"
"AIEEEEE OH-NO AAG AAAAAH"
"AAAAAAA AAAA6GH!"

YOU CAN SKIP THAT PART...
OOH. YAAAH. AUGHH. YAAH YAAAAGLK... NOOOOOOOO
YOU CAN SKIP THAT PART, TOO
NO. NO. NO
AKKK.KK. UNH. UNH UNH.
AIEEEEE.
THERE SEEMS TO BE A TREND SHAPING UP HERE...
DIDN'T YOU GET ANYTHING USEFUL?
M'LORD?
USEFUL! USEFUL!
YOU'RE RIGHT. WHY BE PICKY?
I'D SETTLE FOR SOMETHING SORT OF COHERENT...
THERE WAS SOMETHING ONE OF THEM SAID...
...eh...
"REVOLUTION... THE PITS"
AND THEN WHAT?
AND THEN HE DIED, M'LORD...
ISN'T THAT JUST LIKE A PRISONER...?
YOU INVEST A GOOD HOUR AND A HALF BREAKING THEM ON THE RACK...
AND THEN UP AND DIE ON YOU...

"THE PITS"?
...WHAT ARE "THE PITS"?
THE PITS?
WHY... THE PITS ARE...
WHEN YOU BOYS ARE THROUGH PLANING "STUMP THE STENOGRAPHER"...
...LET ME KNOW AND I'LL ORGANIZE SOME NEW GAMES...
ON SECOND THOUGHT, THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME FOR YOU TO TRY OUT YOUR COVER AS KITCHEN STAFF SUPERVISOR
YOU COULD BASTE THE COOK OR SOMETHING...
I SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU... LORD JULIUS DOES NOT PERMIT HIS EMPLOYEES TO SPEAK TOGETHER EXCEPT THROUGH HIM...
HE BELIEVES THAT IT CAUSES MUCH DISSATISFACTION IN THE CITY...
HOW DOES ANYTHING GET DONE?
THIS IS A BUREAUCRACY, SIR...NOTHING IS SUPPOSED TO GET DONE!

LORD JULIUS' TANTRUM POSED A PROBLEM FOR CEREBUS: IF HE WAS TO FIND OUT ABOUT "THE PITS" FROM ONE OF THE INNUMERABLE BUREAUCRATS, HE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL DUSK WHEN THEY WOULD BE THROUGH PASSING PAPER BACK AND FORTH FOR THE DAY...
"WHERE" MUSED THE EARTH-PIG "CAN I FIND SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE BUREAUCRACY WHO CAN SPARE A FEW MINUTES FOR AN INTERVIEW?"
BLASPHEMERS!
YOU ARE ABOMINATIONS IN THE EYES OF THE LIVING TARIM...
REPENT...!
I LOOK ABOUT ME...
AND WHAT IS IT I SEE?

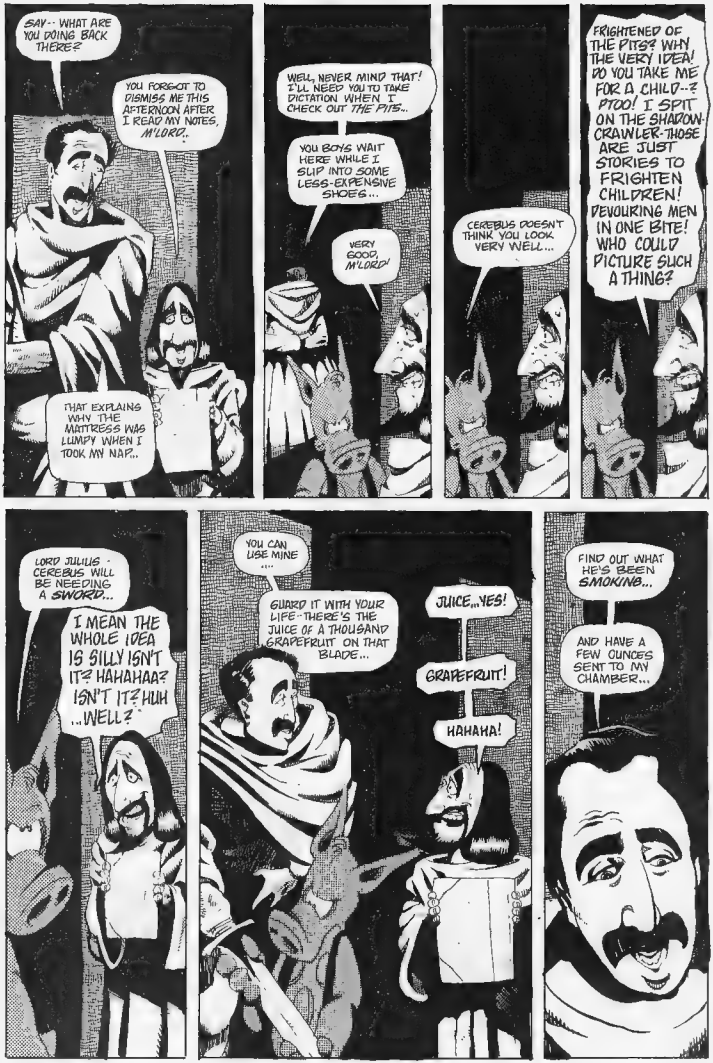

I SEE HARLOTS...
...DRUNKARDS!
PHILANDERERS...
...GLUTTONS!
EH?
...CEREBUS WISHES SOME INFORMATION!
...DWARVES IN DECADENT FUR COSTUMES!
SINNERS OF ALL...
YOU WISH SOME INFORMATION?
"THE PITS"
CEREBUS WISHES TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE...

AH! THE PITS! A FOUL PLACE! FOUL, INDEED
BENEATH THE CITY THEY ARE!
"HIDDEN FOREVER FROM THE EYES OF MEN! REMNANTS OF THE OLD CITY AND ITS OLD WAYS... IT'S A STORY THAT BEGAN WHEN THE FIRST LORDS OF PALNU UNTAPPED MYSTERIES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD! THERE WERE RUINOURS OF STRANGE UNHOLY EXPERIMENTS ... ALCHEMY AND OTHER FORBIDDEN DISCIPLINES..."
"FOR A TIME, THE CHURCH OF TARIM STRUCK PALNU FROM THEIR MAPS, AND ALLOWED NO PRIEST TO VENTURE WITHIN A HALF-MILE OF IT."
"AND THEN... ABOUT A CENTURY AGO..."
"AN EARTHQUAKE SWALLOWED UP THE CITY; A GIFT FROM THE INFINITE MERCIES OF THE LIVING TARIM... THOUSANDS DIED, VIRTUALLY IN THE BLINKING OF AN EYE! FULLY NINETY PERCENT OF THE CITY DISAPPEARED BENEATH THE SURFACE. EVEN TODAY, MANY OF THE OLD STREETS LIE INTACT BENEATH THE CITY..."
"IT IS THESE PASSAGE-WAYS WHICH ARE CALLED..."
"...THE PITS."
"THOUGH MOST REGARD THEM AS AN AMUSING BIT OF FOLKLORE, POPULATED BY MYTHICAL BEASTS, DREAMED UP TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN"
"THEY ARE UNAWARE THAT MUCH EVIL MANIFESTED IN THE OLD CITY YET LIVES IN THOSE DARK CAVERNS"

AND WHAT KIND OF EVIL IS IT THAT STILL LIVES AFTER A...?
BLASPHEMY!
UNHOLY!
UNCLEAN!
JEWELRY!
ADORNMENTS!
GRAVEN IMAGES!
NI!
...CEREBUS THANKS YOU FOR YOUR HELP...
A PRIEST OF TARIM LIVES ONLY TO SERVE.
WASH THAT EVIL PAINT FROM YOUR FACE, UNBELIEVER!!
CAST OFF THESE-- DEMONIC ORNAMENTS!
...AND BEG THE LIVING TARIM FOR FORGIVENESS!
TWAK
BE NOT UNCONSCIOUS BUT OPEN THINE EYES TO THY WICKED WAYS!
TWAK!

BE UNCONSCIOUS, THEN, BUT BE NOT DEAD - OR I SHALL SURELY FACE A MURDER RAP..
CEREBUS MUST SPEAK TO LORD JULIUS ABOUT PRESSING THESE PRIESTS INTO SERVICE AS SHOCK TROOPS...
THE AARDVARK MAKES HIS WAY TO THE ANTE-CHAMBER OF JULIUS' OFFICE, LADEN WITH MAPS, PLANS AND SCROLLS..
EVEN A CURSORY GLANCE THROUGH THE MATERIAL CONFIRMS THE EXISTENCE OF THE PITS: THE PLANS SHOW THE KNOWN FREEAGE WAYS AND ACCESS ROUTES INTO THEM...
IF CEREBUS' SUSPICIONS PROVED CORRECT, HE KNEW HE WOULD NEED AS COMPLETE A KNOWLEDGE OF THOSE HIDDEN CORRIDORS AS WAS POSSIBLE BEFORE HE EXPLORED THEM...
AH! JUST THE PERSON I WAS LOOKING FOR...
LORD JULIUS -- CEREBUS HAS FOUND SOMETHING ON ALL THESE REVOLUTIONARIES ...
YOU KNOW, THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS WHEN IT'S MY TURN TO STAGE A FESTIVAL...
THE PROBLEM IS, OF COURSE, TO FIND OUT WHERE THEY'RE HIDING...
WHEN YOU'RE SURROUNDED BY BUREAUCRATS, YOU HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING HALF A TON OF PAPER SHUFFLED FROM ONE END OF THE CITY TO THE OTHER...
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THEIR MOBILITY, THEIR HIT-AND-RUN TACTICS AND THEIR ORGANISATION ...

BUT ASK THEM TO COME UP WITH AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR THE FESTIVAL OF PETUNIAS
...AND THESE ARE THE SUGGESTIONS I PAID GOOD MONEY FOR...
THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE IN THE CITY THAT COULD CONCEAL THAT MANY PEOPLE...
"THE BALLROOM... THE BALLROOM ...THE CENTRAL PLAZA... THE BALLROOM...THE BALLROOM..."
THROWING CAUTION TO THE WIND I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU MIGHT HAVE AN IDEA..
...THE PITS!
OF COURSE! THE PITS!
OH, MOTHER! WHAT AN IDEA! OLD LEOPOLD THOUGHT NO ONE WOULD EVER TOP HIS FESTIVAL OF GROUNDHOGS IN A LIVE VOLCANO!
WHAT A PARTY THIS WILL BE!
PARTY!
LORD JULIUS -- CEREBUS WAS TALKING ABOUT...
"THE PETUNIAS IN THE PITS!"
I WONDER IF IT'S TOO LATE TO WALLPAPER!
WELL, NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT TO CHECK OUT WHAT WE HAVE TO WORK WITH...
OH, BASKIN!
M'LORD?

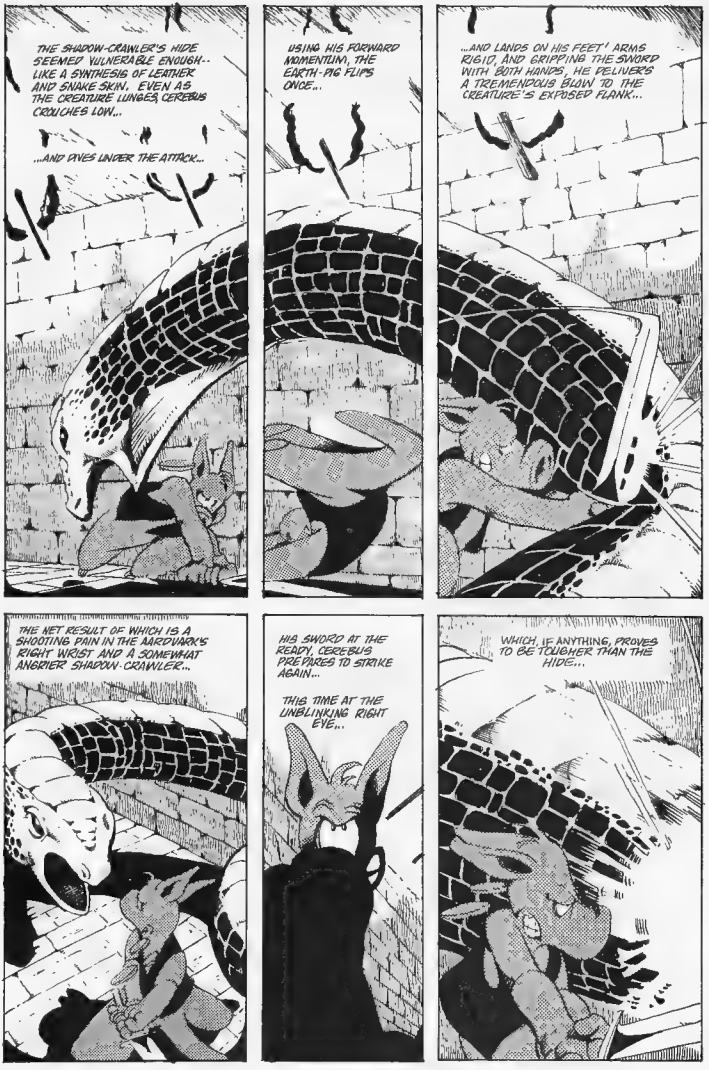

SAY-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK THERE?
YOU FORGOT TO DISMISS ME THIS AFTERNOON AFTER I READ MY NOTES, M'LORD.
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE MATTRESS WAS LUMPY WHEN I TOOK MY NAP..
WELL, NEVER MIND THAT! I'LL NEED YOU TO TAKE DICTATION WHEN I CHECK OUT THE PITS...
YOU BOYS WAIT HERE WHILE I SLIP INTO SOME LESS-EXPENSIVE SHOES...
VERY GOOD, M'LORD!
CEREBUS DOESN'T THINK YOU LOOK VERY WELL...
FRIGHTENED OF THE PITS? WHY THE VERY IDEA! DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A CHILD--? PTOO! I SPIT ON THE SHADOW-CRAWLER-THOSE ARE JUST STORIES TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN! DEVOURING MEN IN ONE BITE! WHO COULD PICTURE SUCH A THING?
LORD JULIUS - CEREBUS WILL BE NEEDING A SWORD...
I MEAN THE WHOLE IDEA IS SILLY ISN'T IT? HAHAHAA? ISN'T IT? HUH ...WELL?
YOU CAN USE MINE ....
GUARD IT WITH YOUR LIFE--THERE'S THE JUICE OF A THOUSAND GRAPEFRUIT ON THAT BLADE...
JUICE...YES!
GRAPEFRUIT!
HAHAHA!
FIND OUT WHAT HE'S BEEN SMOKING...
AND HAVE A FEW OUNCES SENT TO MY CHAMBER...

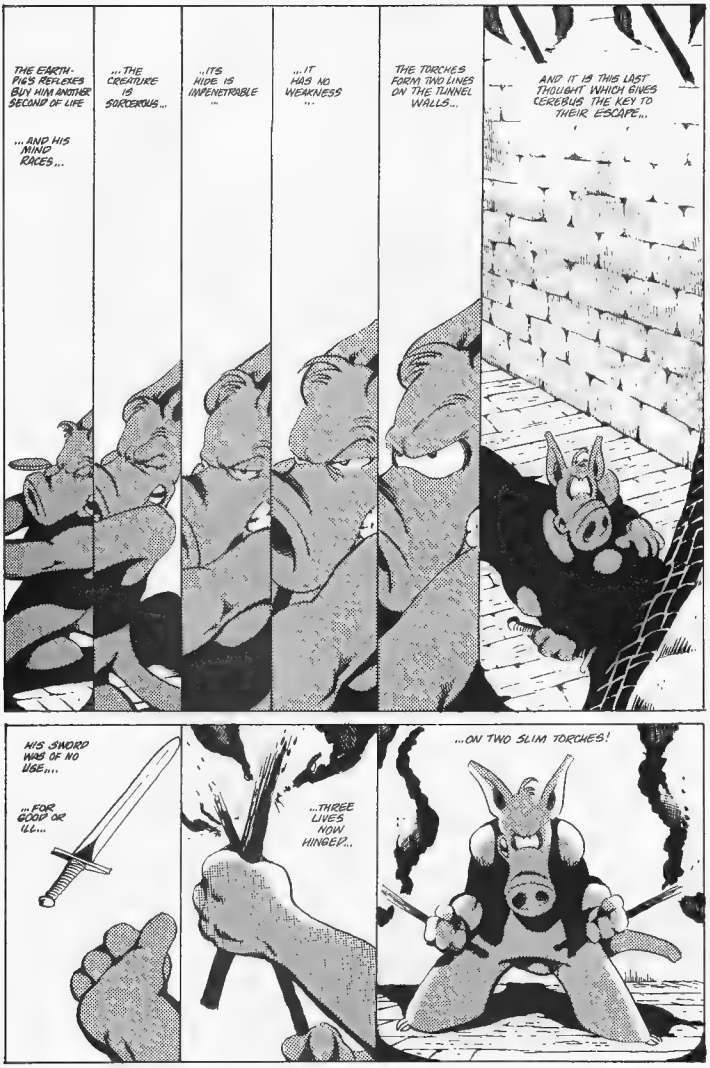
HE WAS JUST TELLING CERBUS SOME FOLK TALES ABOUT THE PITS HE REMEMBERED FROM HIS CHILDHOOD...
SILLY--YES! SILLY--SILLY FOLK TALES
ABOUT-THE-PITS..
MOMENTS LATER, THE TRIO DESCENDS INTO A DARKNESS AS SUFFOCATING AS IT IS SILENT...
FIRST OF ALL, WE'RE GOING TO NEED A WORK-CREW TO SCRAPE THIS GRAY SLIME OFF THE WALLS...
WASN'T IT PARMOC THAT SENT US THE MESSAGE OF A POSSIBLE FOOD SHORTAGE THIS WINTER?
YES M'LORD
HAVE THE SLIME GARNISHED WITH FRUIT SLICES AND DELIVERED BY CARUAN WITH MY COMPLIMENTS...
SOMETHING IS AMISS!
NO--I'M PRETTY SURE..
FRUIT SLICES WITH GRAY SLIME... NO DOUBT ABOUT IT...!
THAT DOOR... ON THE PLANS IT WAS MARKED AS BEING BLOCKED BY TEN FEET OF RUBBLE ....
THIS IS AN OUTRAGE! YOU MEAN, SOMEONE HAS STOLEN TEN FEET OF MY RUBBLE?

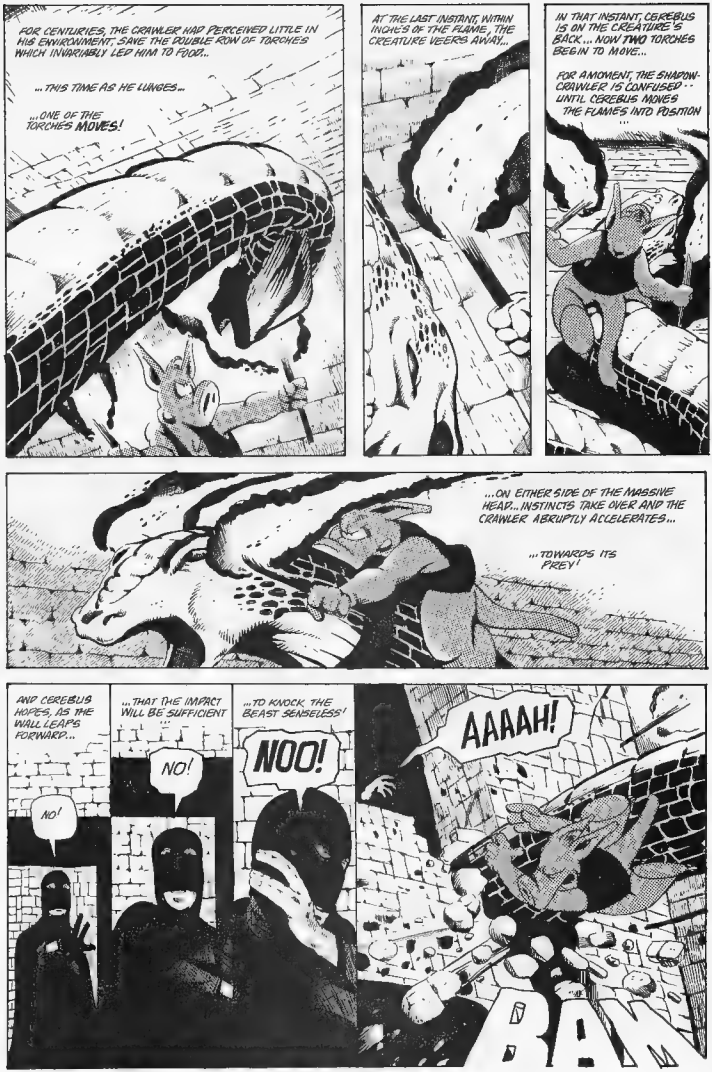
...OR...
...EATEN IT.
DON'T BE ABSURD! THE PEASANTS ARE HUNGRY...
...BUT THEY'RE NOT THAT HUNGRY...
COME ALONG, BASKIN! IF THAT RUBBLE THIEF IS STILL AROUND, HE'S GOING TO RUE THE DAY HE TANGLED WITH US!
STAY CLOSE TOGETHER... THIS MAY BE A TRAP...
M-MAYHAP WE SHOULD TURN BACK
I DON'T LIKE TO DISILLUSION YOU BOYS, BUT ANYONE STUPID ENOUGH TO STEAL RUBBLE COULDN'T BE SMART ENOUGH TO CONSTRUCT A REALLY SOPHISTICATED...
CLANG
CLANG
HELP

ABRUPTLY, TORCHES FLARE TO BRILLIANT LIFE, BLINDING THE TRIO...
GREETINGS...
WHEN THEIR VISION CLEARS, THEY ARE IN A LONG TUNNEL OF ROUGH STONE BLOCKS--THE SIDE WALLS ILLUMINATED BY TWO ROWS OF TORCHES...
...AS THE LEADER OF THE "EYE OF THE PYRAMID" I BID WELCOME TO THE SOON-TO-BE-DEPARTED LORD JULIUS OF PALNU AND HIS...
...COMPANIONS.
MAYHAP YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED...
BUT ONE OF YOUR RABBITS ISN'T IN HIS HUTCH...
INTENTIONAL, I ASSURE YOU ...WHEN I SAW YOU CARRYING A SWORD, I ASSUMED YOU WERE LORD JULIUS'...
...CHAMPION?
LORD JULIUS' EMPLOYEE...
...IF YOU COME DOWN HERE IT WILL SAVE CEREBUS THE TROUBLE OF DISMANTLING THAT WALL...
FOR A THOUSAND YEARS HAS THE PYRAMID SURVIVED...
AND, FOR A THOUSAND YEARS...
THERE HAS BEEN BUT ONE FATE FOR THE UNBELIEVER...

THE SHADOW CRAWLER
TARIM!
=GASP=
DON'T TELL ME WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE...
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW...


THE SHADOW-CRAWLER'S HIDE SEEMED VULNERABLE ENOUGH-- LIKE A SYNTHESIS OF LEATHER AND SNAKE SKIN. EVEN AS THE CREATURE LUNGES, CEREBUS CROUCHES LOW...
...AND DIVES UNDER THE ATTACK...
USING HIS FORWARD MOMENTUM, THE EARTH-PIG FLIPS ONCE...
...AND LANDS ON HIS FEET, ARMS RIGID, AND GRIPPING THE SWORD WITH BOTH HANDS. HE DELIVERS A TREMENDOUS BLOW TO THE CREATURE'S EXPOSED FLANK...
THE NET RESULT OF WHICH IS A SHOOTING PAIN IN THE AARDVARK'S RIGHT WRIST AND A SOMEWHAT ANGRIER SHADOW-CRAWLER...
HIS SWORD AT THE READY, CEREBUS PREPARES TO STRIKE AGAIN...
THIS TIME AT THE UNBLINKING RIGHT EYE...
WHICH, IF ANYTHING, PROVES TO BE TOUGHER THAN THE HIDE...


THE EARTH-PIG'S REFLEXES BUY HIM ANOTHER SECOND OF LIFE
...AND HIS MIND RACES...
...THE CREATURE IS SORCEROUS...
...ITS HIDE IS IMPENETRABLE ...
...IT HAS NO WEAKNESS ...
THE TORCHES FORM TWO LINES ON THE TUNNEL WALLS...
AND IT IS THIS LAST THOUGHT WHICH GIVES CERBERUS THE KEY TO THEIR ESCAPE...
HIS SWORD WAS OF NO USE...
...FOR GOOD OR ILL...
...THREE LIVES NOW HINGE?...
...ON TWO SLIM TORCHES!


FOR CENTURIES, THE CRAWLER HAD PERCEIVED LITTLE IN HIS ENVIRONMENT SAVE THE DOUBLE ROW OF TORCHES WHICH INVARIABLY LED HIM TO FOOD...
...THIS TIME AS HE LUNGES...
...ONE OF THE TORCHES MOVES!
AT THE LAST INSTANT, WITHIN INCHES OF THE FLAME, THE CREATURE VEERS AWAY...
IN THAT INSTANT, CEREBUS IS ON THE CREATURE'S BACK... NOW TWO TORCHES BEGIN TO MOVE...
FOR A MOMENT, THE SHADOW-CRAWLER IS CONFUSED... UNTIL CEREBUS MOVES THE FLAMES INTO POSITION
...ON EITHER SIDE OF THE MASSIVE HEAD... INSTINCTS TAKE OVER AND THE CRAWLER ABRUPTLY ACCELERATES...
...TOWARDS ITS PREY!
AND CEREBUS HOPES, AS THE WALL LEAPS FORWARD...
NO!
...THAT THE IMPACT WILL BE SUFFICIENT...
NO!
...TO KNOCK THE BEAST SENSELESS!
NOO!
AAAAH!
BAM

TOO BAD THE BARS DIDN'T GO BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM UNTIL YOU HIT THE WALL...
OTHERWISE I COULD HAVE HELPED YOU WITH THAT OVERSIZED PORTION OF FISH-BAIT!
THAT RUMBLING!
SPEAKING OF FISH--IT LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE REVOLUTIONARY AND SNAKE FETISHIST IS DEPARTING THE PREMISES...
WE'LL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM LATER, LORD JULIUS...
CEREBUS SEEMS TO HAVE LOOSENED A PIVOTAL PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE ...
THE SHORT EXPANSE OF FLOOR STRETCHES BEFORE THEM AS STONE CONTINUES TO DROP IN EVER-LARGER PIECES...
AND JUST AS THE CEILING SHRUGS AND GIVES UP IN ITS CENTURIES-OLD COMPETITION WITH GRAVITY...
...THEY ARE OUTSIDE OF THE TUNNEL...
...EACH, MORE OR LESS, ALIVE...

WELL...
AT LEAST I'VE GOT MY RUBBLE BACK!

THIS ROUND IS YOURS, LORD JULIUS ...
...BUT WE SHALL MEET AGAIN...
...AT YOUR LITTLE FESTIVAL!

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
June 16, 1989

This advertisement appeared in the original Cerebus No. 15

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CEREBUS
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June 16, 1989

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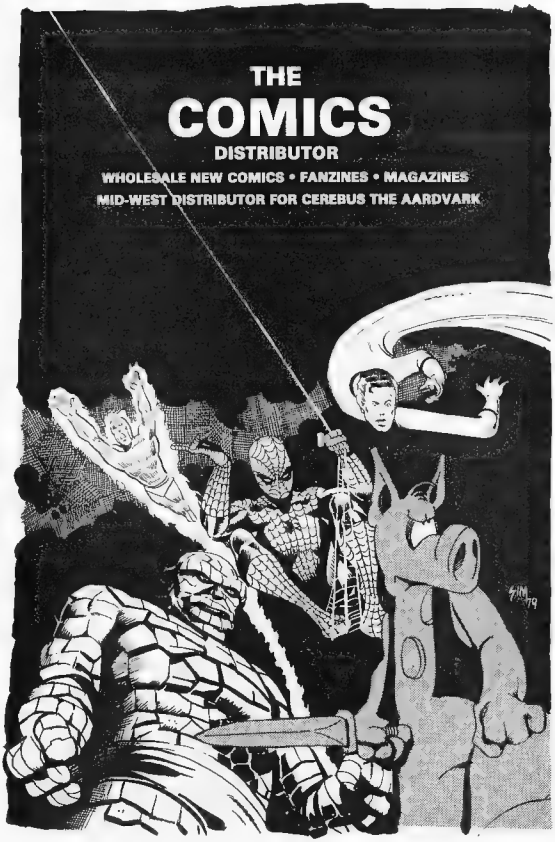

CEREBUS
bi-weekly
June 16, 1989

This is the original letters page to Cerebus No. 15

AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 3W5

Brill! Brill! Brill!

Just knock me out with a feather duster, anything. Just keep the aardvark coming!! Stan Lee and Co just kick the bucket and bow out quietly You've been pulverized

Sorry to be repetitive but I think the mag more than merits it. The illustrations are pretty epic and getting better all along, but the storyline in every issue, (but **especially** in numbers six and eleven) are untouchable!! Your fans in England may be a small clan, but we're totally loyal!

Keep it up, Aardvarkians

Liz Burak
Science Fiction and
Fantasy Society,
Hatfield Polytechnic
P.O. Box 109,
Hatfield, Herts

Brill! Brill! Brill! to you too. I just love these colourful local greetings

. . .

Dear Denise and Dave,

Cerebus first came to my notice when I read Kim Thompson's praising article in the COMICS JOURNAL

The comic sounded interesting, but I forgot about it for several weeks until I noticed a whole stack of Cerebus in my local comic shop and decided, despite the high price over here, to buy a couple of issues

It was a good thing I did — right from the very start I fell in love with your furry, grey aardvark

The comic combines a number of things which please me. Firstly, the setting — I am a great fan of both Robert E. Howard and Michael Moorcock, so the sword and sorcery elements are very much my kind of taste

The action flows very smoothly and were it not for the fact that Cerebus is an aardvark, he could almost be Howard's famous hero himself

Dave, your art is, in a word, beautiful. But, to elaborate - you combine a smooth, cartoony Cerebus with figures and backgrounds which are much more detailed and realistic Cerebus' appearance is further enhanced with the use of one, constant tone. This makes him stand out from the page and definitely adds to the artwork

And one of the most important aspects of the comic — Cerebus is fun! In fact, Cerebus has to contain the best humour I have ever read in a comic

He is not all laughs however Cerebus has a depth of character rarely seen in a comic. The ending of issue nine, I felt, was really very sad

Anyway, best wishes for the future — I will continue buying Cerebus as long as I am able

Nigel Dobbyn
30 Evans Road
Eynsham, Oxford,
OX8 1QR

I'm getting awfully curious about how much Cerebus does cost in England. It's beginning to sound like our English readers are "a small clan", "loyal" and impoverished to boot. Seriously, the number of letters from across the big pond is increasing with each issue. One way or another it looks like Cerebus is getting around.

. . .

Dear Dave

Snortle
Chuckle, chuckle Mmmmpf
Hee, hee!
Ho, ho, ho! so much gasp fun, I wheeze, had to run out and play paint flamenco puff with my brother's mouse collection

Just a m nute
There, that's a bit better

I like this issue. Really did. Didn't have that touching quality of 6, and you still haven't come up with a line to top the condominiums for Tarim pitch of 11, but nothing as yet has approached the consistency of 13's stream of half wit humour. Love it

Hee hee har arrgh whoop wheep!
Ahem.

It's been just about two years now since Terry Hamilton stuffed 3 down my throat. They've been a good two years for my reading thanks to you

Keep it up
Chortle slurp hahahaha hyup!

P.S. If you don't put me on the newsletter list (regardless of cost) I will start mailing my drool to you til you do

Peter Green
2526 W 14th Ave
Vancouver B.C.

What Cerebus fans lack in social decorum they more than make up for in grossness. I will be forwarding a bill for one hundred and twelve dollars and seventeen cents to Peter for each issue of his custom-produced Cerebus newsletter (glad you added the line about regardless of cost, Pete). Seriously, as mentioned last issue, there is just no time to produce a newsletter (not to mention money). We'll just have to cram as much information into this letters page as we can. Stay tuned.

. . .

Dave

In between writing a letter to you concerning Cerebus' godhood and actually seeing the damn thing in print, I read Michael Moorcock's six part Corum series. The little furry guy and the religions surrounding him do hint at Corum, especially in THE BULL AND THE SPEAR, THE OAK AND THE RAM, and THE SWORD AND THE STALLION. Both were not truly Gods, but not ordinary men. Both had religions built around them, although neither wanted it. Corum became like a god and Cerebus?

In a back issue of your book, someone asked for a satire of Corum (Jhaelen Irsei (ever try to pronounce the names in Mr. Moorcock's books?) This person probably intended for you to do a character much like Elrod. But it seems Cerebus **himself** has become this parody. **Please** go with this. If for no other reason than to give us a Shary-a-Conel type character. He could tell Cerebus of an eternal champion, and that Cerebus and Elrod are one and the same being.

Give Cerebus a silver snout warmer. Bring in the Thoi Myore and Gaynor the Damned. God, but this thing's got potential. It could be stretched into five, six issues. Or a special giantsized magazine. Big eight and a half by eleven inch pages! A wrap around cover! A frontispiece! (I'm babbling aren't I? And this letter's got too many goddamn parentheses, right? I thought so. Better sign off now before it's too late)

Larry Will
231 S. Cuyler Ave.,
Oak Park, Ill.,
60302

Larry has cautioned me that printing this letter will only encourage him to write more. I figured it was worth the risk to prove to all the babbling Moorcock fans that they're not alone in this world.

. . .

Dear Dave and Deni

I've been a dedicated aardvark-booster ever since about the time issue number 6 came out, when fellow-crazy John Anderson 'suggested' (demanded might be a better word) that I read an issue or two. I did, and I've been hooked ever since. More than a year has passed since then, and you've produced another eight instalments of the Earth-pig's adventures, eight issues that show a steady increase in Dave's abilities as both a writer and more importantly, as an artist. You seem to exploit the full potential of the comic book page as a

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AARDVARK COMMENT

KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

story-telling medium more often than most current artists, and it is this, I think, that makes **Cerebus** as good as it is: the full integration of story and art, and the way the two compliment each other so well. I must admit that issue 13 was a bit of a let down after the excellence of issues 11 and 12 (two of the best comics I have ever read, anywhere), but the current issue, 14 is a fine effort throughout, topped off by one of your best covers yet. It remains to be seen whether or not you can maintain this level of quality on a monthly basis, but I for one am hoping, and betting, that you can.
Jim Pattison,
P.O. Box 97
Wingham, Ontario
N0G 2W0

Thank you for the vote of confidence, Jim. So far the monthly schedule has been a strain — less from the standpoint of creating the twenty new pages each issue than in figuring out the logistics of getting the books to the distributors and the money in before the next issue has to be paid for. We are ironing out the bugs though, and if all goes well (as well as it did this time), the next issue should be available in the third week of April.

* * *

NOTES

Some bad news this time around. Those of you who have grown to love Bronx the aardvark since we mentioned him in the past letters column will be saddened to learn that he has since passed from this mortal coil, discovered by his keeper curled up in his favourite hollow log. Coincidentally, this is how I plan to go myself. Right after I finish inking issue 17. Thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Davis (my grandma) of Burlington, Ontario for clipping the item out of the Hamilton Spectator.

* * *

It is with a somewhat reddened face that I admit to an oversight. I missed a very important news item last time trying to squeeze all of the newsletter tid-bits into the letters column. Since the middle of December, I have been doing a bi-weekly Cerebus the Aardvark strip in THE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR COMICS FANDOM. Each segment is a single page, patterned on Hal Foster's Prince Valiant. All of you aardvark completists shouldn't go running for the sleeping pills quite yet. Although six instalments have come and gone, you can still subscribe by sending 5.00 for 12 issues or 8.00 for 26 issues to Dynapubs, Illinois, 61244 For those of you with infinite patience and a shortage of shekels, we will be reprinting these strips, probably in a future edition of SWORDS OF CEREBUS or in their own magazine.

* * *

ARTWORK UPDATE: Pages available from issue 13: 1-10, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 22. From issue 14: 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14-20. Cost per page is twenty five dollars. Send to Dave Sim, Kitchener, Ontario.

* * *

Since I seem to have a little extra room this time around, I would like to thank everyone for supporting Cerebus through these first dozen or so issues. I started Cerebus with the idea that what fans have been looking for for a long time is an alternative comic book that sticks to its publishing schedule. I had long been bothered by publishers who declared a publishing frequency and then failed to maintain it. Although Cerebus would have to be classed as a very small cult book (our circulation - 4200 - has remained virtually unchanged since issue 6) and it is getting more difficult to cover the increased costs on the same old income, Deni and I have always been impressed by the loyalty of the fans that we do have. I was prepared from the beginning for scathing letters from people who, for one reason or another, disliked my way of doing comics. In point of fact, the only thing that has threatened (and continues to threaten) the future of CEREBUS THE AARDVARK are the comic book shops and distributors. It is here that my fear of a mixture of bad and good has definitely emerged full-blown. With each issue of Cerebus, there has been no fewer than two or three crises that brought us very close to extinction. Distributors who didn't pay for their shipments, agreements that have been made and then broken at the eleventh hour. We still owe a great deal of money to a number of people who have helped us through these crises. Fortunately, our heads are still more or less above water.

But through it all, the people who have remained loyal and who have converted the most number of Marvel fans into Marvel-and-aardvark fans are you folks. Cerebus is built like a pyramid on a very broad base. Each time one of you talks a local comic book shop into carrying this mag, or shows a copy to a fellow comics fanatic, you set off a ripple that eventually reaches the fourteenth floor of the Conestoga Towers.

Maybe Marvel can turn its corporate back on you. As they never grow tired of explaining, fan sales make up a very small fraction of their profits. They don't think much of your taste in comics, artists, writers or anything else.

But in the world of comic book fandom, it doesn't matter how big a comic shop is, or how large a territory a distributor handles. When it comes down to the bottom line, it is **your** bucks that keep him in business. The good guys are the ones who realize this and strive to serve each and every fan who comes into his store or sends him an order. The bad guys are the ones who figure they can be selective about who they serve.

As I said before, Cerebus hovers perpetually between success and bankruptcy.

Each issue that comes out is a tribute to the ability of fans to keep a comic book on the stands.

And as long as you keep doing your part.

I'll keep doing mine.

Punchem Innaface

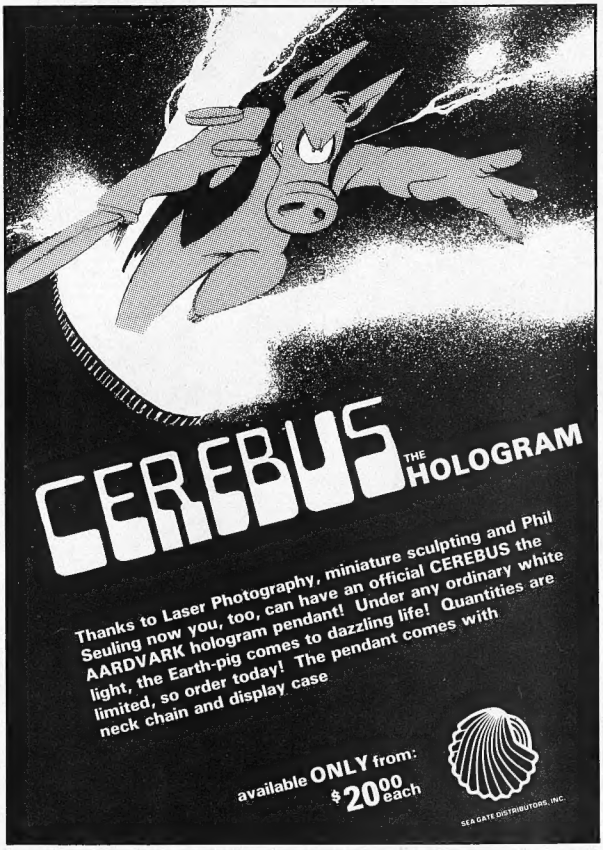
My first attempt at drawing Cerebus the Aardvark in comics form from early 1977.

THE SINGLE PAGE • *ULTRA KLUTZ SELLS OUT*

IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN POPULARITY, ULTRA KLUTZ NOW BATTLES MONSTERS IN TWELVE HOUR SHIFTS.
I'M WIPED...
FLUD
AW, C'MON, I'M GIVIN' IT ALL I GOT!
BEE-BOO
BEE-BOO
BEE-BOO
ULTRA KLUTZ'S WARNING LIGHT BEGINS TO BLINK, SIGNIFYING THAT THERE SIMPLY AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE PAYING ATTENTION. IF HE IS IGNORED ALL TOGETHER, HE WILL NEVER RISE AGAIN!!
GOTTA THINK FAST-- GOTTA THINK! HMMM... LET'S SEE... I GOTTA BOOST SALES! UM... AH HA! A HYPED-UP DEATH SCENE!
SHORTLY:
ARGOLL, KILL TANA!
DON'T MISS NEXT ISSUE, FOLKS! CALL (900) 893-2607 AND VOTE FOR MORE DEATH. DEALERS: LAST CHANCE TO UP YOUR ORDERS.
WHAT?
SAM!
I WON'T JUST KILL ON COMMAND.
SAM, WHY DID YOU SAY THAT?
C'MON, ARGOLL, YOU'RE A "SUPER-VILLAIN."
A WHAT?
AW, SKIP IT.
COMIC BOOK FANS
THAT WON'T SOLVE YOUR PROBLEM. YOU SUFFER EDITORIALLY. YOU JUST AREN'T FUNNY ENOUGH.
AND PEOPLE CAN'T DEAL WITH CARTOONY ART MIXED WITH PATHOS.
WHA--? I'LL SHOW THESE SAPS!
"OKAY, THEN. HOW ABOUT..."
ULTRA MEGA
TM ©1989 Mountainous Comics Group
IS MY ROLE AS HERO VALID? MY FEELINGS RUN DEEP..
BUT OUR WHOLE PREMISE IS LUDICROUS!
"OR WOULD YOU PREFER..."
WACKY KLUTZ
© Reg. U.S. Pat. Off. 1989 Generic Syndicate
SAM, HOW COULD YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF KILLING ME?
DON'T WORRY! IT'S JUST A FUNNY BOOK.
SEE!
3-89
WOW, I'LL TAKE ULTRA MEGA. IS IT A MINI-SERIES? WHO'S THE INKER?
I WANT A COPY OF WACKY KLUTZ. IT LOOKED PRETTY FUNNY. HA HA HA.

©1989 Jeff Nicholson. **ULTRA KLUTZ** is currently on hiatus. Please haunt your favorite shop for back issues.
For a free retail catalog, write ONWARD COMICS • P.O. Box 3684 • Chico, CA 95927

This advertisement appeared as the Inside Back Cover of Cerebus No. 15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the original back cover to CEREBUS number fifteen

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